

"Mike Anderson"  
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01/10/2007 03:37 PM

To:  
cc:  
Kerr" <andykerr@andykerr.net>  
Subject: Burnt Willow white fir

<comments-pacificnorthwest-  
<jtking@fs.fed.us>, "James W

January 10, 2007

Joel King  
Acting District Ranger  
Lakeview Ranger District  
18049 Highway 395  
Lakeview, OR 97630

Re: Burnt Willow white fir

Dear Joel:

Thanks for your December 14, 2006 letter seeking comment on your proposal to modify the Burnt Willow project to allow selective removal of white fir trees greater than 21 inches in diameter. This departure from the Eastside Screens would be limited to instances where it would be expected to benefit an adjacent old growth ponderosa pine.

As you may know, the Lakeview Stewardship Group's Long-Range Strategy for the Lakeview Federal Stewardship Unit specifically addresses the issue raised in your letter. On page 18, the Strategy includes the following recommended management guideline regarding old growth forests: "Propose adjustments to Eastside Screens to allow cutting of large (>21", but less than 120 years old) white fir in stands currently or historically dominated by ponderosa pine."

I think that your proposal is essentially consistent with this guideline. While you would not necessarily limit the cutting to trees less than 120 years old, you would not allow trees to be cut if they exceed 26 inches in diameter or "have old growth characteristics, such as big limbs."

It would be interesting to test the correlation between tree age and old growth characteristics by actually counting the rings on some of the large white fir that are cut in Burnt Willow. Either the Forest Service could do so as part of regular project monitoring, or we could include that as part of a future LSG field trip. Project monitoring and evaluation should also attempt to assess whether removing the large fir actually benefited the old growth pine.

Hopefully we can arrange a field trip during or soon after implementation of the Burnt Willow project.

Best wishes for the big trees in 2007!

Sincerely,

Mike Anderson  
Senior Resource Analyst  
The Wilderness Society

cc: Jim Walls, Rick Brown, Andy Kerr